DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS
TELEGRAPH BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

(20)
ACTION COPY

EXCISE

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3-D

Control 12435.

Rec'd March 27, 1950
5:56 p.m.

ACTION: EUR
INFO:
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FROM: Brussels

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 503, March 27, 6 p.m.

1. Following request of Prince Regent March 25 that Labor Defense Minister Deveze be charged to act as "Formateur" to establish new government Deveze yesterday in press conference stressed that he would first of all seek a solution of political crisis based on agreement between three principal parties excluding Communists. Stressing grave view with which Belgian social, financial and economic circles regard present impasse Deveze said "I do not know anyone occupying an important position in the national economy who does not tremble before consequences of present crisis. I shall seek a solution in interest of the monarchy, the dynasty and the country and if I do not suceed I shall not hesitate to have recourse to dissolution of Parliament."

2. Deveze concluded that he fixed March 30 as deadline for his endeavor on account of need to attend Defense Committee meeting NAT countries in Hague. This last comment was in reply to question of Schoenbrun, CBS correspondent, who today gave Brussels broadcast to US stressing that important business affairs have been neglected owing to political crisis and emphasizing point Belgian Parliament has not ratified MDAP bilateral. Schoenbrun says wire services filed similar stories.

[redacted]

DC/R central files

755.00/3-2750

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MAR 29 1950

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY J.L. Smith DATE NOV 19 1982
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2 #503, March 27, 6 p.m. from Brussels.

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MURPHY

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FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SECURITY: RESTRICTED PRIORITY: AIR POUCH

EUR INDEX

TO: Department of State

MAR 3 755.00/3-3150
XR 755.11

FROM: BRUSSELS 424 March 31,1950 5 enclosures

REF: The Royal Question

SUBJECT: RECENT POLITICAL EVENTS AT CHARLEROI

DEPARTMENT STATE MESSAGE CENTER

The coal mining town of Charleroi is one of the strongest centers of opposition to Leopold's return. In the Popular Consultation of March 12 the arrondissement of Charleroi voted 66% against his return.

On March 24 Charleroi was one of the Walloon towns in which occurred a twenty-four hour anti-Leopold strike and demonstration. This officer visited the town on that date. The strike was not complete, but the orderly demonstration against the King was impressive.

The local police reported that there had been no disorders during the morning. The town was almost deserted at that time as nearly all the inhabitants remained at home.

At the office of La Nouvelle Gazette (Liberal; circ. 60,000), the largest local paper, it was learned that of the fifty-six local coal mines twelve had struck completely, thirty-five partially, and eleven were in operation. Since this was a political strike the foreign miners, who constitute more than half of the underground force, did not strike.

About 80% of the trams were not operating. Railroad service was not seriously affected. Other utilities appeared normal.

After lunch crowds appeared on the street for the first time and a large parade commenced to wind through the narrow streets. Blinds were down on some shops but most of them were glad to take their chances in return for increased business.

[redacted]

However, the demonstration and subsequent speeches at the Maison du Peuple (Socialist party headquarters) occurred without disorder. The crowd was large and, although quiet, appeared

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appeared extremely serious about the affair.

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On March 26 there occurred at Charleroi a so-called National Walloon Congress which was attended by prominent local members of the Liberal, Socialist and Communist parties, including the Liberal Ministers REY and BUISSERET, both of whom spoke.

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The resolution which was adopted at the end of the meeting sounds more anti-Leopold than pro-federalization in tone.

B-1

Five photographs are enclosed showing street scenes at Charleroi and Brussels on March 24, the day of the strike. Explanations are written on the back of each.

Chalmers B. Wood,
Third Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

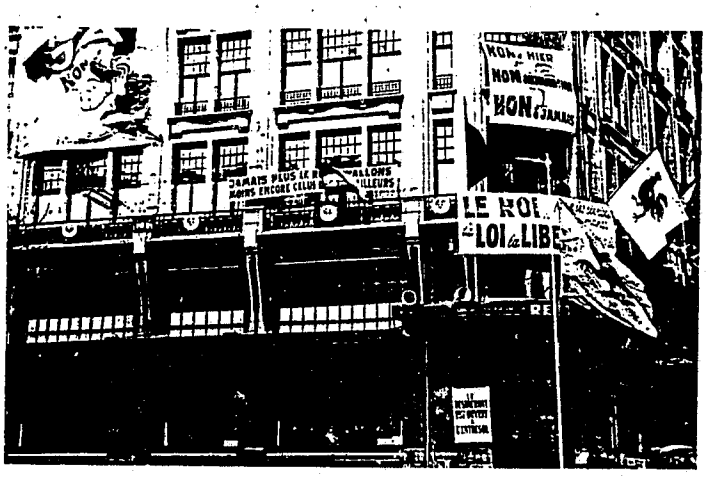
5 photographs of street scenes at Charleroi and Brussels on March 24.

RESTRICTED

DTS

WELCOME
CARRY
LION OIL
HUILES RENAULT
MARTINI

NOUS
Préférons mourir Debout!
Barrera la Route
AUX
FACISMES


NON
NON D'HIER
NON DE TOUJOURS
LE ROI
LOI de LIBE

66
PHOSPHATINE